

The Garden of the Gnostics

(Bustan al-'Arifin)

an-Nawawi



Chapter One

Sincerity (*ikhlas*) and having a conscious intention in all actions

Allah says, *"They were only ordered to worship Allah, making their din sincerely His as people of pure natural pure belief (hunafa'),¹ and to establish the prayer and pay zakat - that is the deen of the correct. (din al-qayyima)." (98:5)* This means the straight (*mustaqim*) system of worship. It is also said that it means "based on the truth" (*al-qa'imatu bi'l-haqq*). Allah knows best.

Allah says, *"If anyone leaves his home, emigrating to Allah and His Messenger, and death catches up with him, it is Allah Who will reward him."* (4:100)

Allah says, *"Your Lord knows best what is in your selves."* (17:25)

Allah says, *"Their flesh and blood does not reach Allah but your fear of Him (tawqa) does reach Him."* (22:37)

Ibn 'Abbas, may Allah be pleased with him, said, "It means that your intentions reach Him."

Ibrahim said, *"Taqwa* is the means by which you desire His Face."

Imam Abu'l-Hasan al-Wahidi reported that az-Zajjaj said, "The meaning of this is that Allah will not accept an offering of flesh and blood when it is offered without fearful awareness of Allah. He accepts that through which you show Him your fearful awareness of Him." This indicates that no act of worship is without intention. The intention is that you want to draw near to Allah and carry out His command.

Our Shaykh, Abu'l-Baqa' ash-Shafi'i, may Allah be pleased with him, related to us from Abu'l-Yaman al-Kindi, from Muhammad al-Ansari, from Abu Muhammad 'Ali al-Jawhari, from Abu'l-Husayn al-Muzaffar, from Abu Bakr al-Wasiti, from Abu Nu'aym 'Abd ibn Hisham al-Halabi, from Ibn al-Mubarak, from Yahya ibn Sa'id, from Muhammad ibn Ibrahim at-Taymi, from 'Alqama ibn Waqqas al-Laythi, that 'Umar ibn al-Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, said that the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said:

"Indeed, actions only go by intentions. Everyone gets what they intend. Anyone, therefore, who emigrates for Allah and His Messenger, then his emigration is indeed for Allah and His Messenger. But anyone who emigrates to gain something of this world or to marry a woman, his emigration is for that for which he emigrated."

This hadith is unanimously agreed to be sound. Its position is immense and sublime. It is one of the foundations of belief (*iman*), its first pillar and its strongest support. It is a unique and precious hadith, as is well-known.

The backbone of its *isnad* is Yahya ibn Sa'id al-Ansari. Ash-Shafi'i said, "This hadith from the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, is only sound by virtue of its having come by way of 'Alqama, and only sound by virtue of having come from 'Alqama by way of Yahya ibn Sa'id. From Yahya, the transmission of it spreads out to more than 200 men, most of whom are Imams."

Imam al-Bukhari related it in his *Sahih* in seven places. He related it at the beginning of his book, and in the chapters on belief, marriage, freeing slaves, emigration, giving up deception and oaths. This hadith is related in the *Sahih* in various ways: "Indeed actions only go by intentions," and "Indeed action is only by the intention." At the beginning of the Book of Shihab, it reads, "Actions are by intentions," and does not include the word "indeed." However, Abu Musa al-Isfahani said that the *isnad* of transmission for this version is not sound. The meaning of the intention is to aim for the goal. It is the heart's resolve.² "Indeed" is used to express limitation. It affirms what is mentioned, and rejects everything else. The meaning of the hadith is that the actions of the Shari'a are only valid by intention. As for the one whose goal is the pleasure of Allah by his emigration,³ and as for the one whose goal is this world, both of them obtain only that portion.

According to this hadith, the intention is a precondition for wudu', ghusl, tayammum, prayer, zakat, fasting, retreat, hajj, etc. Muhammad ibn Idris ash-Shafi'i, may Allah be pleased with him, said, "This hadith contains seventy gates of the science of law (fiqh)." He also said, "This hadith contains one-third of knowledge." Ahmad ibn Hanbal, may Allah be pleased with him, stated, "It contains a third of knowledge." Others have mentioned this hadith in the same way.

Abu Bakr al-Bayhaqi said in the beginning of his book, *The Summary of the Sunan*, "What ash-Shafi'i meant about the fact that it contains a third of knowledge derives from the fact that the slave acquires everything by means of his heart, his tongue and his intentions. The intention is one of the divisions of his acquisition, but it is the most predominant of the three, because it is worship on its own. The other two are not. Words and actions can be perverted by showing-off. But this does not affect intention in any way."

Scholars recommend that you begin all books with this hadith. Al-Bukhari is one of those who have begun their books with it. It is the first hadith in his *Sahih* Collection, which is the soundest book after the Book of Allah. Abu Sa'id 'Abdu'r-Rahman ibn Mahdi said, "If I had written a book I would have started every chapter with this hadith." He also said, "Whoever desires to write a book should begin it with this hadith." At the beginning of Information about the Commentary on the *Sahih* of al-Bukhari, al-Khattabi said, "Our previous shaykhs recommended that we put the hadith, "Actions are by the intention", at the start of all matters of the deen that we initiate, since it is generally needed in all aspects of the *deen*."

We have heard many things like this from the early Muslims regarding this hadith. Allah knows best. The chain of transmission (*isnad*) of this hadith is very rare and excellent among the people of hadith. This is due to the fact that its chain of transmission includes three Followers, each one relating the hadith from the others. These three Followers are: Yahya ibn Sa'id al-Ansari, Muhammad ibn Ibrahim at-Taymi and 'Alqama ibn Waqqas. Although this is marvellous, there are several sound hadiths that have three Followers relating the hadith from one another, and there are even some that include four Followers in the chain. Ibn 'Abdu'r-Rahman gathered them all together in a section of his book. I have transmitted it and condensed it at the

beginning of my commentary on the *Sahih* of al-Bukhari. I added some others to them which I found to be like them. There were more than thirty hadiths of this kind, but Allah knows best.

Now let us turn to those hadiths which are said to be the basis of Islam and the roots of the *deen*. They are the bedrock of Islam and the core of the science of law and knowledge. We will mention them in this section because one of them is the hadith, "Indeed actions only go by intentions." They are very important, and should be the first to be dealt with. Scholars have differed a great deal about their number. Shaykh Abu 'Amr 'Uthman ibn 'Abdu'r-Rahman (known as Ibn as-Salah) attempted to compile them and distinguish which they are. I can add nothing whatsoever to his precision and perfection. I have just condensed some of what he mentioned, and added a bit to it which he did not mention.

"The *deen* is good counsel."[4](#)

Part of good counsel lies in attributing the benefit received to the one who gave it. Whoever does that adds to his knowledge and his state. But whoever omits that or plagiarizes from someone should not profit by his knowledge,[5](#) nor should he receive any blessing in his state. The people of knowledge and favour continue to ascribe benefits to the ones who gave the good counsel. We ask Allah for success in this always!

After weighing what the various Imams have said about which hadiths are central to Islam and after considering their disagreement about their number, and which hadiths they actually are, Shaykh Abu 'Amr said, "I arrived at twenty-six hadiths."

1. First Hadith:

The hadith already mentioned:

"Indeed, actions only go by intentions. Everyone gets what they intend. Anyone, therefore, who emigrates for Allah and His Messenger, then his emigration is indeed for Allah and His Messenger. But anyone who emigrates to gain something of this world or to marry a woman, his emigration is for that for which he emigrated."

2. Second Hadith:

'A'isha, may Allah be pleased with her, said that the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said.

"If anyone introduces an innovation in this affair of ours which is not part of it, it will be rejected." [6](#)

Everyone agrees that this hadith is sound. Al-Bukhari and Muslim related it in their *Sahih* collections. In the version in Muslim, it says, "If anyone originates something which is not in accordance with this affair of ours it will be rejected."

3. Third Hadith:

An-Nu'man ibn Bashir, may Allah be pleased with him, reported that he heard the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, say:

"The *halal* is clear and the *haram* is clear. But between the two there are ambiguous matters about which most people have no knowledge. Whoever exercises caution with regard to what is ambiguous

shows prudence in respect of his *deen* and his honour.⁷ Whoever gets involved in the ambiguous things is like a herdsman who grazes his animals near a private preserve. He bound to enter it. Every king has a private preserve and the private preserve of Allah on His earth are the things that He has made forbidden. There is a lump of flesh in the body, the nature of which is that when it is sound, the entire body is sound, and when it is corrupt, the entire body is corrupt. It is the heart."

Everyone agrees that this is a sound hadith and it is related in the two *Sahih* collections.

4. Fourth Hadith:

'Abdullah ibn Mas'ud, may Allah be pleased with him, reported that the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, the truthful and confirmed one, told him:

"The way that each of you is created is that you are gathered in your mother's womb for forty days as a sperm-drop and then for a similar length of time as a blood-clot and then for a similar length of time as a lump of flesh. Then an angel is sent and he breathes the spirit (*ruh*) into you and is encharged with four commandments: to write down your provision, your life-span, your actions, and whether you will be happy or wretched. By Him, apart from Whom there is no god, one of you can do the actions of someone destined for the Garden until there is only an arm's length between him and it, and then what is written will overtake him and he will do the actions of someone destined for the Fire and enter it."⁸ And one of you can do the actions of someone destined for the Fire until there is only an arm's length between him and it, and then what is written will overtake him and he will do the actions of someone destined for the Garden and enter it."

Al-Bukhari and Muslim related it in their *Sahih* collections.

5. Fifth Hadith:

Al-Hasan ibn 'Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, said, "I remember that the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, stated:

"Leave what gives you doubt for what gives you no doubt."⁹

It is a sound hadith. At-Tirmidhi and an-Nasa'i related it. At-Tirmidhi said that it is a sound hadith.

6. Sixth Hadith:

Abu Hurayra, may Allah be pleased with him, reported that the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said:

"Part of the excellence of a man's Islam is his leaving alone what does not concern him."¹⁰

It is an excellent hadith. At-Tirmidhi and Ibn Majah related it.

7. Seventh Hadith:

Anas ibn Malik, may Allah be pleased with him, said that the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said,

"Not one of you will believe until he desires for his brother what he desires for himself."¹¹

It is agreed to be sound.

8. Eighth Hadith:

Abu Hurayra, may Allah be pleased with him, said:

ÔThe Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said, ÔO people! Allah is good and He only accepts the good. Allah gives the same command to the believers that He gives the Messengers. Allah Almighty says, "*O Messengers! Eat of the good things and act rightly*" (23:52) and the Almighty says, "*O you who believe! Eat of the good things We have provided for you.*" (2:172) Then he mentioned a man who goes on a long journey, is dishevelled and dusty and he stretches his hands to heaven, saying, 'O Lord! O Lord!' when his food is *haram*, his drink is *haram*, his clothes are *haram*, and his sustenance is *haram*. How could such a man be responded to?"[12](#)

Muslim related it in his *Sahih* collection.

9. Ninth Hadith:

"Do not inflict injury nor repay one injury with another."[13](#)

Malik and ad-Daraqutni and a group of notable men related it with an uninterrupted chain of transmission. It is an excellent hadith.

10. Tenth Hadith:

Tamim ad-Dari, may Allah be pleased with him, reported that the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said:

"The *deen* is faithfulness/good counsel."[14](#) We asked, "To whom?" He replied, "To Allah, His Messenger, the Imams of the Muslims, and their common people."

Muslim related it.

11. Eleventh Hadith:

Abu Hurayra, may Allah be pleased with him, said that he heard the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, say:

"Stay with what I have left you [without asking for more]. Those before you were destroyed by their excessive questioning[15](#) **and their disagreeing with their Prophets."**

Everyone agrees that is is sound.

12. Twelfth Hadith:

Sahl ibn Sa'id, may Allah be pleased with him, said:

"A man came to the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, and said, 'Messenger of Allah, show me an action which will make Allah love me and people love me if I do it.' He replied, 'Go without in this world [16](#) **and Allah will love you. Do without in what people have, and people will love you!'"**

It is an excellent hadith. Ibn Majah related it.

13. Thirteenth Hadith:

Ibn Mas'ud, may Allah be pleased with him, reported that the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said:

"The blood of a Muslim man who says that there is no god except Allah and that I am the Messenger of Allah is not lawful (to shed) except in three cases: a married man who commits adultery, a life for a life, and someone who abandons the *deen* and splits up the community."

It is agreed to be sound.

14. Fourteenth Hadith:

'Abdullah ibn 'Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, reported that the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said:

"I am commanded to fight people until they testify that there is no god except Allah and Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah, establish the prayer, and pay zakat. If they do that, their lives and their property are protected from me, except for the right of Islam.¹⁷ Their reckoning is up to Allah Almighty."

It is agreed that it is sound.

15. Fifteenth Hadith:

Ibn 'Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, reported that the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said:

"Islam is based on five things: the testimony that there is no god except Allah and that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah, performing the prayer, paying zakat, performing the hajj to the House and fasting Ramadan."

It is agreed that it is sound.

16. Sixteenth Hadith:

Ibn 'Abbas, may Allah be pleased with him, reported that the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said:

"If people had been given what they claim, men would lay claim to the property of the people and their blood. However, the one making the claim must bring a clear proof, and the one who denies it must take an oath."

This hadith is related in this way, while part of it is included in the *Sahih* collections.

17. Seventeenth Hadith:

Wabisa ibn Ma'bad, may Allah be pleased with him, mentioned that he went to the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, who said:

"Have you come to ask me about piety (*birr*)?" "Yes," Wabisa replied. The Prophet said, "Consult your heart. Piety is that with which the soul is at rest and the heart is at rest. Wrong action is what is hatched up in yourself, and echoes to and fro in your breast, even if people give a decision in your favour and ask for your opinion."

One version has, "even if the one asked gives a decision in your favour." It is an excellent hadith. Ahmad ibn Hanbal, ad-Darimi and others have related it. The version of an-Nawwas ibn Sam'an is in the *Sahih* Collection of Muslim. He said, "Piety consists of good character and wrong action is that which you hatch up in yourself and which you hate to show to people."

18. Eighteenth Hadith:

Shaddad ibn Aws, may Allah be pleased with him, reported that the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said:

"Allah has written excellent behaviour (*ihsan*) for everything. Therefore when you kill, kill well. When you sacrifice, sacrifice well. Each of you should sharpen the edge of his knife and should calm down his sacrificial animal."

Muslim related it.

19. Nineteenth Hadith:

Abu Hurayra, may Allah be pleased with him, reported that the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said:

"Whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day should speak what is good or remain silent.[18](#) Whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day should honour his neighbour. Whoever believe Allah and the Last Day should honour the guest."

It is agreed to be sound.

20. Twentieth Hadith:

Abu Hurayra, may Allah be pleased with him, reported that a man said to the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace:

"Give me some advice!" He said, "Do not get angry."[19](#) He repeated his request several times, and the Prophet repeated, "Do not get angry."

Al-Bukhari related it in his *Sahih* collection.

21. Twenty-First Hadith:

Abu Tha'laba, may Allah be pleased with him, reported that the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said:

"Allah has made certain things into obligations, so you should not neglect them! He has made certain things unlawful, so you should not commit them! He has been silent about certain things as a mercy to you without any forgetfulness of His part, so do not delve into them!"

Ad-Daraqutni related it with an excellent chain of transmission.

22. Twenty-Second Hadith:

Abu Dharr and Mu'adh, may Allah be pleased with them, reported that the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said:

"Fear Allah wherever you are.²⁰ Follow up an evil action with a good action which will wipe it out. Treat people well."²¹

At-Tirmidhi related it and said that it is an excellent hadith. In some copies, he says that it is a sound/excellent hadith.

23. Twenty-Third Hadith:

Mu'adh, may Allah be pleased with him, narrated:

"I said, 'Messenger of Allah, tell me of an action I can do which will admit me to the Garden and keep me far away from the Fire!' He said, 'You have asked about a great matter, but it is easy for the one to whom Allah makes it easy. You should worship Allah and do not associate anything with Him, do the prayer, pay zakat, fast Ramadan and go on hajj to the House.' Then the Prophet said, 'Shall I direct you to the gates of good? Fasting, which is protection, and *sadaqa*, which extinguishes mistakes as water extinguishes fire, and the prayer of a man in the middle of the night.' Then he recited, '*Their sides eschew their beds as they call on their Lord in fear and ardent hope. And they give of what We have provided them. No self knows the delight that is hidden away for it in recompense for what it used to do.*' (32:16-17) Then he said, 'Shall I tell you of the head of the matter, its support and its peak?' I said, 'Yes indeed, Messenger of Allah.' He said, 'The head of the matter is Islam and its support is the prayer and its peak is jihad.'²² Then he said, 'Shall I tell you of the foundation of all that?' I said, 'Yes, Messenger of Allah.' He took hold of his tongue and said, 'Restrain this!' I said, 'Messenger of Allah, will we be taken to task for what we say?' He said, 'May your mother be bereaved! Are people thrown on their faces in the Fire for anything other but the harvest of their tongues?'"²³

At-Tirmidhi related it and said that it is sound/excellent.

24. Twenty-Fourth Hadith:

'Irbad ibn Sariya, may Allah be pleased with him, said:

"The Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, gave us a profound exhortation which made our hearts afraid and our eyes weep. We said, 'Messenger of Allah, it is an exhortation which is as if it were bidding us farewell, so advise us!' He said, 'I commend you to fear Allah and to hear and obey, even if it a slave is put in command over you. Any among you who live long enough will see much disagreement, so you must hold to my Sunna and the sunna of the rightly-guided khalifs. Hold onto it with your teeth. Beware of new matters. Every innovation is misguidance.'"

Abu Dawud and at-Tirmidhi related it and said that it is a sound/excellent hadith.

25. Twenty-Fifth Hadith:

Ibn 'Abbas, may Allah be pleased with him, said:

"I was behind the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, one day. He said, 'Young man, I will teach you some words. Hold fast to Allah and He will preserve you! Cling to Allah and you will find Him before you! If you ask, ask Allah.²⁴ If you seek help, seek it from Allah.²⁵ Know that even if the community were to join together to do something to benefit you, they could only benefit you, they could only benefit in what Allah has written for you. And if they were to join together to do something to harm you, they could only harm you in what Allah has written for you. The pens have been lifted and the pages are dry."

At-Tirmidhi related it, and said that it is a sound/excellent hadith. In a variant other than the one of at-Tirmidhi, it says, "Hold fast to Allah and you will find Him before you! Be acquainted with Allah in ease, and He will be acquainted with you in hardship. Know that what missed you could not have hit you, and that what hit you could not have missed you!" Another version has, "Know that victory comes with steadfastness ²⁶ relief with trouble and ease with hardship."

26. Twenty-Sixth Hadith:

The hadith of Ibn 'Umar from his father 'Umar ibn al-Khattab:

"One day while we were sitting with the Messenger of Allah there appeared before us a man whose clothes were exceedingly white and whose hair was exceedingly black. No trace of travel could be seen on him and none of us knew him. He walked up and sat down by the Prophet. Resting his knees against his and placing the palms of his hands on his thighs, he said, 'O Muhammad! Tell me about Islam.' The Messenger of Allah said, 'Islam is to testify that there is no god but Allah and that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah, to perform the prayers, to pay zakat, to fast in Ramadan and to make the pilgrimage to the House if you are able to do so.' He said, 'You have spoken the truth,' and we amazed at him asking him and then saying that he had spoken the truth. He said, 'Then tell me about belief.' He said, 'It is to believe in Allah, His angels, His Books, His Messengers, and the Last Day, and to believe in the decree, both its good and its evil.' He said, 'You have spoken the truth.' He said, 'Then tell me about ihsan.' He said, 'It is to worship Allah as though you could see Him for while you do not see Him, He sees you.' He said, 'Then tell me about the Hour.' He said, 'The one asked about it knows no more about it than the asker.' He said, 'Then tell me about its signs.' He said, 'That a slavegirl will give birth to her mistress and that you will see barefooted, destitute herdsmen competing in constructing lofty buildings.' Then he left but I stayed on a while. Then the Prophet said, 'Umar, do you know who the questioner was?' I said, 'Allah and His Messenger know best.' He said, 'It was Jibril who came to teach you your religion.'"

These are the hadiths which Shaykh Abu 'Amr ibn as-Salah mentioned, may Allah have mercy on him. One hadith with the same meaning is the following.

27. Twenty-Seventh Hadith:

Sufyan ibn 'Abdullah, may Allah be pleased with him, reported:

"I said, 'Messenger of Allah, tell me something about Islam which I could not ask from anyone but you!' He said, 'Say, "I have believed in Allah," and then go straight.'"

Muslim related it.

28. Twenty-Eighth Hadith:

Abu Mas'ud 'Uqba ibn 'Amr al-Badri, may Allah be pleased with him, reported:

"The Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said, "Provided it does not cause you shame,²⁷ do whatever you wish!"

Al-Bukhari related it in his *Sahih* collection.

29. Twenty-Ninth Hadith:

Jabir, may Allah be pleased with him, reported that a man asked the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace:

"Do you think that if I pray the prescribed prayers, fast Ramadan, make *halal* what is *halal* and make *haram* what is *haram*, and do not do anything more than that, that I will enter the Garden?" He said, "Yes."

Muslim related it.

NOTES

[notes: are by the editor of the Arabic edition, Muhammad Munir ad-Dimishqi, 1348 AH]

1. *Hunafa'*, plural of *hanif*. This designates a Muslim who inclines away from false religions and inclines to the truth. He does not turn aside in his path because the *hanif* is straight. Worship is limited by sincerity, whose action is in turn dependent on the heart. The *hanif* is someone whose outward rectitude is a sign reflecting what is inside him. That is the necessary principle because it is not within the power of man to split the heart open to read what is in it. 'Allah does not charge a soul beyond what it can bear.' It may be possible for a person in a good state to commit wrong actions, but the person who abandons the commands of Allah does not possess any of the *deen* of Islam. The possibility that he will be accepted by Allah is a claim that schemers make to remove their self-doubt. Our Shari'a limits the state of rectitude and the gaining of *wilaya* to someone who has fear of Allah, does what he is commanded to do and refrains from what he is forbidden to do. For this reason, Allah says: "*Establish the prayer and pay zakat.*"

Claiming to be Muslim without acting in accordance with its rules is mocking the *deen*, making light of the Shari'a, and belittling the Muslims. It is not conceivable that Allah should accept any rebellion against Him. How can someone like this be one of His *awliya'* when He has promised the rebels the punishment of the Fire?

"As for him who disobeys Allah and His Messenger, he will have the Fire of Hell, remaining in it timelessly, for ever and ever." (72:23)

Karama, *wilaya* and acceptance belong to someone who safeguards himself with fear of Allah by following Allah's commands and avoiding His prohibitions:

"But as for him who feared the Station of his Lord and forbade the lower self its appetites, the Garden will be his refuge." (79:40)

2. "The heart's resolve": the intention is something that refers to the aim of the heart, not to the tongue and what it articulates. Some *fuqaha'* consider articulation of the intention to be part of the perfection of worship, and to be a *sunna* in the prayer. The position of the Shafi'i school, however, is that the intention naturally accompanies the beginning of the action, unless it is not possible for it to accompany it, as in the case of fasting. The beginning of the prayer is the *takbir al-ihram*, uttering "*Allahu akbar*," so how can someone articulate the intention at the same time he is uttering the *takbir*? As for saying it before the *takbir*, the prayer

has not yet started. Even if we were to state that it helps the heart, this is not desirable. You often find people who make a great noise in their intention to perform the prayer in congregation, sometimes to such an extent that the people cannot follow the imam, and he may go into *ruku'* before the people are aware of it because they are distracted by the uproar of this person uttering his initial intention. Beginning like this is not compatible with the stillness which the Shari'a demands of the person in his prayer. Neither the Sunna nor the books on the life of the Prophet transmit to us that the Companions or the righteous Salaf made this loud noise which exists today in mosques during prayers. It has not come down to us in the Shari'a, and it does not befit the submission and humility required of the slave in the prayer. It is incompatible with the *adab* of standing in the presence of his Lord. Would that I knew whether Imam Malik would agree whether or not one should make this uproar. I think that the person doing the prayer should be humble and still, and avoid anything more than what is absolutely necessary. Is this not more fitting for the prayer? Some people are so filled with doubt that they repeat the prayer many times, thinking that it was invalid because the intention was doubtful. This poor person does not know that what the giver of the Shari'a meant by intention is the person's aim in directing his resolution completely toward what he is doing.

3. Emigration: is emigration from the land of disbelief to the land of Islam valid? It is not lawful for the Muslim to live in the abode of disbelief. These days the unbelievers have overrun the greater part of lands belonging to the Muslims and, in fact, they now rule them. The rest of the Muslim lands have been taken over by their influence. Denying that this is true out of a sense of mere self-importance does the Muslims no good. The writer related in his commentary on this hadith in *The Forty* of an-Nawawi from al-Mawardi that someone who lives with his family and his tribe in the abode of disbelief, and is able to demonstrate that his *deen* is intact is not permitted to practise emigration (*hijra*) because the place he is already in is the abode of Islam. Following this principle is the best way to establish Islam in the abode of disbelief, since calling people to Islam without any struggle is dangerous. If only we would do what al-Mawardi said, then we would recognise their hearts and the spite they have against Islam. Then we would also come to know the means the unbelievers use to corrupt the Muslims and overcome their intellects. We must not despair of reviving the past glory of Islam in our time. Islam does not allow submission to the enemy and cowardice. It calls for bold actions, courage and meaningful strength both in advance and in retreat in every state. We must recognise that the lack of these is the main reason for the loss of our power and the reason for the enemy's victory over us. There must be groups of people calling to Islam who live in Europe and America, who follow the pure, original path, able to preserve their *deen* so long as freedom of religion is preserved and the life of the inhabitant is not in danger.

4. The Messenger of Allah used to make a contract with whomever came to him that he would submit to Islam based on faithfulness and having good faith and counsel for the Muslims. The command to give good counsel is stated openly many times in different hadiths. One of the people who offered allegiance to the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, on that basis was Jarir ibn 'Abdullah al-Bajali. He addressed the people of Kufa on the day that al-Mughira ibn Shu'ba died in 50 AH: "I came to the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, and asked him, 'Shall I offer allegiance in Islam?' He stipulated the condition of good counsel to every Muslim. I gave allegiance to him on that basis." Al-Bukhari also related it at the end of the Book of Belief. That is because giving good advice to someone indicates your love for him. You want him to benefit in what he is doing and make him avoid anything harmful. When the Muslims' love for one another spreads out and sincere good counsel becomes universal, then strength, victory and support envelop them. This is the secret which was given to the Muslims after the death of the Prophet. They overcame the Greeks and the Persians and conquered most of the lands of the world because, by means of the strength of good counsel, they were able to understand what is meant by the *ayat*: "*The Muslims are brothers.*" (49:10)

Their state is described in another hadith: "The believers are like one body. When one part of it complains, the rest of the parts of the body call on each other with fever and sleeplessness." This is the peak of strength which cannot be either resisted or disputed, just as the hardness of metals is based on the strength of their cohesion and solidity. Iron is only stronger than metals and able to affect because of its purity and being free

of other metals which are incompatible with it, as well as by the strength with which its parts are interconnected. The strength of the Muslims is only obtained by their good counsel and love for each other.

5. The one who ascribes someone else's words to himself should not profit by it, because he has failed to keep the trust, which is to attribute knowledge to the one who said it. It is well-known that if someone intentionally commits a breach of trust of this kind, it nullifies any action in which it is used, and strips all the good and blessing from it. It is quite possible that Allah will punish that plagiarist who reaps undeserved benefits since such is the recompense for this kind of action. Acting in this way inevitably leads to impeding knowledge through severing its chain of transmission, failing to give credit to the people upon which it is based and negating the glory of the Salaf.

6. This means if he says something which is not integral to it, since everything that is not consistent with the spirit of the *deen* is false and not accepted. It does not mean that everything must rigidly continue in the same state, for that is contrary to the sunna of Allah which is a creation continually in flux. It is certain that this is only concerned with acts of worship. As far as the basic needs of life or business matters are concerned, the introduction of new elements are acceptable so long as they do not harm the *deen* or bring evil or destruction to the Muslims because of them, even if the consequences do not come into play until much later. For example, when Salman al-Farisi explained the trench to the Prophet, he accepted it based on Salman's opinion, and the Prophet personally began to dig it, even though the use of a trench in warfare and did not exist before among the Arabs, and they did not recognise its value. But the aim was noble to preserve the Muslims from the evil of their enemies.

When 'Umar saw intrigues among the Muslim community, he forbade people to travel except by permission given for a specific length of time on a signed document. Today, this is known as a "passport" which means permission to travel.

When the Muslims saw that they had no dating which they could use to record their events, they agreed to adopt the Hijra dating, beginning from the time of the Prophet's emigration to Madina from Makka. It was used to preserve the recording of events and the records of provisions under 'Umar, but all of this did not exist at the time of the Prophet. However, it was for the general good of the Muslims, so the noble Companions accepted it with joy and satisfaction.

What the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, meant by his command was to follow the Book of Allah and the Sunna of the Messenger, and to look for what would help the Muslims and rejects anything that was destructive or false. Anyone who introduces anything destructive or false is someone who opposes the Shari'a, or what is transmitted from the Prophet, or someone who derives some harmful thing from its introduction which can be used against the Muslims.

7. The Prophet said, "his honour" because when someone does something that is doubtful, he provides fools with an opening to attack him with lies and slander, and then they can claim that he has done something *haram*. So he has made his honour a target open to attack, rebuke and slander, and it becomes a reason for them to fall into wrong action. The Prophet also said, "The one who believes in Allah and the Last Day should not be in situations which provoke suspicion." 'Ali said, "Beware! Whatever comes first to the hearts affects it. Even if he has an excuse, there are many people who listen who will reject and not hear his excuse." So someone like this is drawn on little by little until he comes to the *haram*, even if he has a strong will and firm intention. And another hadith indicates, "Allah curses the thief who steals an egg and his hand is cut off and then he steals a camel so his other hand is cut off." In this, he goes from an egg to a camel, the action issuing from what preceded it, or by having been repeated many times before. Allah says in the Qur'an: "*They killed the Prophets without any right to do so. That was because they disobeyed and went beyond the limits.*" (3:112) He means by this that they progressed from rebellion to killing the Prophets.

8. An- Nawawi said in his *Commentary on the Forty* in reference to this hadith that the seal of whoever believes and does sincere right actions is only good. The evil seal comes to the one whose actions are bad, or someone who mixes bad actions with sound actions based on some kind of hypocrisy and reputation. It is also indicated by this hadith, "One of you may perform the actions of the Garden in what he shows to people," i.e. in what he presents to them of a good outward appearance while his secret is foul and corrupt. Allah knows best.

As for the one who performs the actions of the Fire, he may have sincerity for Islam and the Muslims beyond his own worship and his actions will bring about results of general benefit in accord with what the Prophet intended, but these actions will originate from something other than personal worship. It is a blessing from Allah and he is repaid for what he has performed of good actions and restraining harm. Allah grants him success in those actions in which people see the sign of success, so he enters the Garden by the favour and generosity of Allah.

9. What does not give you doubt is whatever the soul trusts and the heart finds itself at peace with. Wabisa reported that the Prophet said, "Consult your heart, even if the person who is asked gives a decision in your favour." A person has better knowledge of what is inside himself, and his spirit naturally flees from injury, since it cannot be deceived by wrong actions. When it is polished clean by fearful awareness of Allah (*taqwa*), then it only inclines to what brings it profit, thereby pleasing Allah and His Messenger.

10. This means to direct a man's action to what is particular to him or is consistent with his particular tasting and receptiveness. If a man tries to investigate everything, whether or not it has any connection with himself, he will be prevented from true action. The balance is shattered and chaos reigns over actions, because permitting censured actions to people allows him to do anything he pleases.

The Shari'a of Islam is universal. No one is exempt from its rules and the only superiority anyone has over anyone else is through *taqwa* and obeying the commands of Allah. If a person becomes preoccupied with things that do not concern him, his actions will become unsound and unbalanced. This is one of the major factors which hold us back today, turning us into tools manipulated by others. It should not, however, enter into your thoughts that what this hadith says should prevent us commanding what is correct and forbidding what is bad. We seek refuge with Allah from that! That is an absolute command to the Muslims, since the harm which comes from the spread of the bad does not pertain to any one individual. Rather it is like a contagious disease. I should imagine that the people who oppose commanding the correct and forbidding the bad would nevertheless agree that when the existence of an epidemic is suspected in a city, special quarantine places should be built and the city should be put under constant supervision. It is an indisputable fact that sickness in the selves is a stronger force which attacks the body of a community than any outward sickness. When an outward sickness occurs, since it is physical, man flees from it and takes precautions against it. But as for what man does not see, it proceeds apace while no one pays attention to its destructiveness. Man should not involve himself in matters in which neither he nor the community derive any harm or benefit. As for that which does bring about harm or benefit, that is absolute. If you see your neighbour setting fire to his house, you don't say, "It doesn't concern me," since your own house is then exposed to destruction by its flames.

11. "Not one of you will believe until he wants for his brother..." because the *deen* does not call just one person, nor is it just a specific individual right. Muslims are all one in the *deen*. If someone does not love his companion, that may be due to love of this world, in which case he prefers this world to the *deen*, or it may be because of his *deen*, in which case he is envious of his brother, seeking to remove what his brother has, and not pleased with what Allah has allotted him. All the Muslims are like a single body, so lack of love is a sure sign of separation, and separation precedes obliteration and destruction. It is as if he wished to obliterate the *din* itself by his lack of love for his brother. This is absolutely incompatible with belief.

In the *Commentary on the Forty*, an-Nawawi mentioned that love embraces both the unbeliever and the Muslim. He wants for his brother, the unbeliever, what he wants for himself by his becoming Muslim. He wants his Muslim brother to remain in Islam. So it is recommended to make supplication for guidance for the unbeliever. Love in this sense means to desire good and benefit. The love which is meant is in the din, it is not mortal love. Human nature may, in fact, dislike for someone to a blessing, but man must then oppose his human nature and ask Allah for good for his brother, and want for his brother what he wants for himself.

12. "How can he be responded to?" His body is filled with the *haram*. This shows explicitly that *taqwa* is not outward. Not everyone you see who is dirty or who lives a rough life is a righteous person – he must be judged by the Shari'a. If he then appears perfect, then this is truly the virtuous man and it does not matter if he wears fine, new clothes or rags. But if he is lacking in the balance, he is one of the wretched, even if he wears the clothes of the people of *taqwa* and scrupulousness. Some people adopt an ascetic mode in order to attract and trap the hearts of people as well as their property. Some people wear clothes to show the blessings of Allah while others wear clothes out of pride and conceit. All of it revolves around the first hadith, "Indeed, actions are by intentions." But always the real gauge is in either the following of the Shari'a or the lack of following it.

13. Both courses are criticised by the Shari'a because the Shari'a does not permit you to profit by injury done to someone else. This is indicated by the words of Allah: "*Repel the bad with something better and, if there is enmity between you and someone else, he will be like a bosom friend.*" (41:34)]

14. Faithfulness (*nasiha*) to Allah is sincerity in worship, denying any partner associated with Allah, avoiding any deviation from the right way, disconnecting Allah from every kind of imperfection and fault as you perform obedience and urge it on others, avoiding acts of rebellion and impeding others from doing them, and love for Allah and hate for Allah. Faithfulness to the Messenger consists in confirming him, believing in what he brought, spreading his call, giving life to his Sunna, curbing innovation, taking on his character, taking on his behaviour (*adab*) and love for Allah and the Companions of the Prophet. Faithfulness to the Muslim Imams consists in their helping people to the Truth and aiding their obedience in it, commanding it, forbidding what is against it, reminding them of it, and teaching them whatever they omit of it out of negligence. They do not exalt them by praising them.

15. He said "by their excessive questioning" because that is the cause of disputes and disagreements. What the Messenger warned about has occurred. There have been a number of question and many fantasies – highly improbable ones – written down in books which are studied and analysed. They are often about things which cannot normally occur. For instance, there is one that says, "If a bull mates with a cow and then gives birth to a man...." We can actually read this. Furthermore, it goes on to say that in this case it is permissible to slaughter the offspring on the day of the *'id*.

16. He said, "Go without in this world." He does not mean to abandon all activity and to withdraw from the world and be satisfied with living like a wild animal so that someone becomes dependent on charity from others. That is disliked and undesirable. The Allah means to remove the love of this world from the heart while carrying out one's obligatory duties. A Muslim should be neither tight-fisted nor extravagant. Allah has praised the one with economy and balance in His Book, saying, "*Those who, when they spend, are neither extravagant nor mean, but take a stance between the two.*" (25:67)

17. "Except for the right of Islam and their reckoning is up to Allah," i.e. whoever abandons one of the rights of Islam has no right to protection. The command refers to shedding blood if there is harm in it for the Muslims. What is hidden in the conscience and heart is of no consequence. Allah will reckon that.

As for the question of the hypocrites and the fact that the Allah did not kill any of them, their state did not reach the point where they displayed their true state. That which they said to their brothers required fine

interpretation to show their attack and hypocrisy. That is why Allah said, *"you will know them by their ambivalent speech."* (47:30) Ambivalent speech is a riddle or code which companions use so that no stranger will understand what they say. The poet said:

I have used incorrect Arabic to you so that you will understand.
Those who are intelligent understand ambivalent language.

When they wanted to consolidate their position, they built the Mosque of Harm. Allah then commanded His Messenger to destroy their mosque. They were not helped by their ruse of the mosque being something outwardly desirable for the Muslims. The right of Islam demands that Islam be protected and not weakened. Supplication and claiming to love good is not helpful on its own. Had the people of the Mosque of Harm been inside it, it would have been pulled down on top of them. However, they fled and their claim of sincerity did not preserve their mosque which was not for Allah. The real goal is to benefit Islam and the Muslims in every matter, form, state and place,

18. He said, "Let him speak what is good or remain silent." Ash-Shafi'i said that this hadith means that when you want to speak, you should first reflect. If it seems to you that there is some harm in what you are going to say, then hold back. For that reason, al-Qushayri said, "Silence at the proper time is the attribute of men, as speech at the proper time is one of the noblest of qualities." Ad-Daqqaq said, "Whoever is silent about the truth is a dumb shaytan." He said that a person should honour his neighbour. That is because mutual recognition begins from the neighbour whom Allah has recommended in the Book, *"and the near neighbour."* (4:36) To ignore the neighbour and honour someone else indicates that the honouring is deceit or an intention which is not good which occasions doubt. Honouring the neighbour precedes honouring others. When the person is accustomed to honour the near person, he does not refrain from honouring the distant one. "Every man has what he falls back on in his life." The neighbour is generous to the neighbour, so generosity is universal. "Let him honour his guest."

19. He said, "Do not get angry." Anger is a type of madness. It issues from man when he is vain and something does not please him. In that moment, he destroys what he has built up for many years because it is far easier to destroy than it is to build. The goal of the Prophet was to preserve sound actions. He urged people by repeating the advice when he said, "Do not get angry." He wanted to make it easy to remember what he meant by actions. If you threaten your actions with extinction, you cannot preserve anything. You will be like the one who amasses a lot of wealth and then throws it into the sea after a time and is content to do that. The Prophet wanted you to be in control of your intellect and feelings in all states and to preserve the good actions you have acquired in this life.

20. "Wherever you are." There is no difference between your secret and what you make public. This is to direct you to sincerity because Allah is aware of you and what you hide is not hidden from Him. Your worship at home should not be less than your worship in the Masjid al-Haram with no difference between your actions. We do not make any difference between the times when people are present and when they are absent.

21. "Follow up an evil action with a good action which will wipe it out." Allah says, *"Good actions eradicate evil ones."* (11:114) "Treat people well" because it is the fount of all virtues. Allah praised His Messenger Muhammad for this excellent quality: *"Indeed you are truly vast in character."* (68:4) The sunna of Allah in His creation is to make people need each other. They cannot do without mutual help. Bad character seeks loneliness, and a life apart from people. This is contrary to the teachings of the Islamic *deen* which establishes gathering for prayer five times a day. How can the one whose nature is incompatible with their nature be able to mix with them? When dissension and strife is about to occur, the Prophet commanded people to have good character in order to join forces.

22. The head of the matter and its support is jihad. That is because it demonstrates strength and might and thus preserves security. Judgements are given when there is security. Allah is worshipped openly without any opposition or dissent when there is security. Abandoning jihad indicates weakness and submission to the enemy. Islam would remain a house without a foundation.

23. How excellent what the Prophet said! He said, "restrain this" because the tongue translates what is in the heart. He can say what he does not believe and act in accordance with what he said. Offering excuses will not help you. Even if it helps you when the *hadd*-punishment is not carried out, it will not remove you from the doubt which you have started. You will not know how to free yourself from it. He said, "the harvest of tongues" because Allah has given man a great gift. It is that he is not to be punished for what the heart imagines and for a plan on its own. When he speaks, it is written down against him and he offers himself to the responsibility. If it had not been for his tongue, he would have been innocent and safe.

24. He said to ask Allah because the might of Islam rejects abasement and humbleness to other than the Creator who has favour. Asking someone like you will lead you to apathy and consideration for the people you ask. Elevating humans is contrary to pure *tawhid*.

25. He said to ask Allah for help, in respect to belief of harm and benefit, not for help in actions. Allah urged that as He says, "*Help each other to goodness and taqwa.*" (5:2)

26. He said, "Victory comes with steadfastness." It is one of the principles of the *deen*. Most people forget it. It is not giving any scope for despair to reach the heart. The Muslims must have strong resolution in the state of trouble no less than what they have in the state of joy, and in the state of defeat no more than the time of victory. They should direct their attention to "We will help Our Messengers and those who believe," and "the Party of Allah, they are the victors."

27. He said, "Provided it does not cause you shame," i.e. before Allah and His Messenger, do not be worried about doing whatever you like. This is a warning. If you are travelling to Us and you will see the actions which you did. "If it is the weight of a mustard-grain and it is in a rock or in the heavens or the earth, Allah will bring it."

Excerpts from: Bustan al-'Arifin fiz-Zuhd wat-Tasawwuf

The garden of the gnostics in asceticism and self- purification

Imam ash-Shafi'i said, may Allah have mercy on him: '*Only the sincere one (mukhlis) knows hypocrisy (riya).*'

Imam an-Nawawi comments,

This means that it is impossible to know the reality of hypocrisy and see its hidden shades except for one who resolutely seeks (arada) sincerity. That one strives for a long time searching and meditating and examining at length within himself until he knows or knows something of what hypocrisy is. This does not happen for everyone. Indeed, this happens only with the special ones (al- khawass). But for a given individual to claim that he knows what hypocrisy is, this is real ignorance on his part.

I shall mention in this book a chapter, Allah willing, in which you will see a type of wonder that will cool your eyes. To illustrate the great extent of the concealment of hypocrisy we only need relate the following from the Teacher and Imam Abu al-Qasim al-Qushayri, may Allah have mercy on him, from his Risala with our isnad previously mentioned.

He (al-Qushayri) said :

'I heard Muhammad ibn al- Husayn say: I heard Ahmad ibn `Ali ibn Ja`far say: I heard al-Hasan ibn `Alawiyya say: Abu Yazid [al-Bistami]*, may Allah be well pleased with him, said:

I was for twelve years the blacksmith of my ego (haddadu nafsi), then for five years I became the mirror of my heart (mir'atu qalbi), then for a year I looked at what lay between the two of them and I saw around me a visible belt [i.e. of kufr = the vestimentary sign of a non-Muslim subject of the Islamic state]. So I strove to cut it for twelve years and then looked again, and I saw around me a hidden belt. So I worked to cut it for five years, looking to see how to cut. Then it was unveiled for me (kushifa li) and I looked at creation and saw that they were all dead. So I recited the funeral prayer over them.'

Imam an-Nawawi comments,

I say: That hypocrisy should be as inscrutable as this to the peerless master in this path [i.e. tasawwuf] is enough to show how greatly hidden it lies. His phrase: *'I saw them dead'* is the apex of worth and beauty, and seldom do other than the Prophet's words, Blessings and Peace be upon him, gather up such wealth of meanings. I shall touch upon its meaning briefly. It means that after he had struggled long and hard and his ego had been disciplined and his heart illumined, and when he had conquered his ego and subdued it and achieved complete mastery over it, and it had subjected himself to him totally, at that time he looked at all created beings and found that they were dead and completely powerless:

they cannot harm nor can they benefit;

they cannot give nor can they withhold;

they cannot give life nor can they give death;

they cannot convey nor can they cut off;

they cannot bring near nor can they take away;

they cannot make happy nor can they make sad;

they cannot bestow nor can they deprive;

they possess for themselves neither benefit nor harm,

nor death, nor life,

nor resurrection.

This, then, characterizes human beings as dead: they are considered dead in all of the above respects, they are neither feared nor entreated, what they have is not coveted, they are not shown off to nor fawned upon, one does not concern oneself with them, they are not envied nor disparaged, their defects are not mentioned nor their faults pursued and exposed, one is not jealous of them nor thinks much of whatever Allah-given favors they have received, and they are forgiven and excused for their shortcomings, although the legal punishments are applied to them according to the Law. But the application of such punishment does not preclude what we have mentioned before, nor does it preclude our endeavoring to cover up their faults without disparaging them in the least.

This is how the dead are viewed. And if someone mentions human beings in a dishonorable manner we forbid him from probing that subject in the same way that we would if he were going to examine a person who died. We do not do anything for their sake nor do we leave Him for them. And we no more stop ourselves from fulfilling an act of obedience to Allah on their account than we do on account of a dead person, and we do not over-praise them. And we neither love their own praise for us nor hate their insults, and we do not reciprocate them.

In sum, they are as it were non-existent in all the respects we have mentioned. They are under Allah's complete care and jurisdiction. Whoever deals with them in such a way, he has combined the good of the next world with that of the lower world.

May Allah the Generous grant us success towards achieving this. These few words are enough to touch upon an explanation